

Message Text

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R 162020Z OCT 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 204927

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, JA, UR

SUBJECT: JAPANESE CONCERNS ON YAKUTSK GAS PROJECT

REF: TOKYO 12781

1. APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S REPORT REFTEL ON JAPANESE CONCERNS ABOUT EL PASO GAS TALKS WITH SOVIET DELEGATION. GENERAL CONTENTS WERE DISCUSSED WITH EL PASO WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVE WHO WAS IN TOUCH WITH HOUSTON EARLY ON OCTOBER 4.

2. AFTER EL PASO'S MEETING WITH JAPANESE AND SOVIETS, DEPT OFFICER HAS BEEN IN TOUCH WITH EL PASO REP IN HOUSTON. EL PASO PROVIDED ITS SIDE OF STORY AND AGREED SUMMARY COULD BE TRANSMITTED FOR USE AT EMBASSY'S DISCRETION.

3. LAST JULY EL PASO REPS VISITED TOKYO GAS IN TOKYO AND FULLY SHARED WITH JAPANESE RESULTS THEIR \$500,000 STUDY OF
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YAKUTSK PROJECT, GAVE THEM COPY OF EL PASO PROTOCOL WITH

SOVIETS WHICH WAS IN EFFECT AN AGREEMENT TO NEGOTIATE, AND ASSURED JAPANESE THEY WANTED TO GO INTO THIS PROJECT TOGETHER. THEY FELT THAT TIME WAS AT HAND FOR EL PASO AND TOKYO GAS ON ONE SIDE OF TABLE TO NEGOTIATE WITH SOVIETS ON OTHER SIDE. JAPANESE PROPOSED SUBSEQUENT MEETING IN HOUSTON WITH EL PASO. EL PASO SUGGESTED HAWAII AS MORE CONVENIENT POINT FOR JAPANESE, BUT LATER JAPANESE CANCELED MEETING ON GROUNDS SHOULD WAIT UNTIL AFTER SUMITA VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW. EL PASO THEN PROPOSED MEETING DUR-

ING SEPTEMBER BUT JAPANESE DECLINED BECAUSE ANZAI WAS FULLY OCCUPIED WITH INTERNAL REORGANIZATION MATTERS. AT THAT POINT EL PASO DECIDED IT WAS PRESSING TOO HARD AND LET MATTER RIDE WHILE KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH TOKYO GAS THROUGH SUMITOMO REP IN HOUSTON.

4. WHEN HOUSTON MEETING WITH SOVIETS WAS ANNOUNCED JAPANESE STATED ALMOST AT LAST MINUTE THAT THEY WISHED MEET WITH EL PASO FIRST. EL PASO DECLINED FOR LACK OF TIME AND BECAUSE OF NEED TO PREPARE FOR SOVIETS, PROPOSING THAT JAPANESE COME AFTER SOVIETS HAD LEFT. EL PASO PLANNED TO DISCUSS GAS PRICES WITH SOVIETS BUT FELT THAT ISSUE COULD NOT BE SEPARATED FROM FINANCING DISCUSSIONS. WHEN JAPANESE APPEALED, EL PASO AGREED SEE THEM IN HOUSTON OCT 4-5.

5. EL PASO REPS MEET WITH MURAKAMI AND OTHERS FOR THREE HOURS ON OCT 4 AND ONE HOUR ON OCT 5 TO EXPLAIN THEIR POSITION. EL PASO AGAIN PROPOSED AMERICANS AND JAPANESE JOIN IN FUTURE MEETINGS WITH SOVIETS. JAPANESE AGREED AND REPORTEDLY RETURNED TO TOKYO SATISFIED. ON OCT 9 SOVIET GROUP LED BY OSIPOV ALSO AGREED TO THREE PARTY TALKS.

6. EL PASO REP IN HOUSTON SAID HE WAS "IRKED" BY JAPANESE APPROACH TO EMBASSY, SINCE HE FELT JAPANESE WERE REPOSSIBLE FOR LACK OF CONTACT. DEPT OFFICER RESPONDED JAPANESE PROBABLY WENT TO EMBASSY FOR HELP AFTER RECOGNIZING THEIR ERROR, BUT THAT THEY WOULD NOT WISH ADMIT THAT DIRECTLY.

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7. EL PASO GAVE US IMPRESSION AIR HAS NOW BEEN CLEARED AND THAT COMMUNICATIONS WITH MURAKAMI ARE FULLY RESTORED. EL PASO HOPES JAPANESE WILL IN FUTURE BE FULLY PREPARED TO SIT WITH EL PASO REPS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH SOVIETS.

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